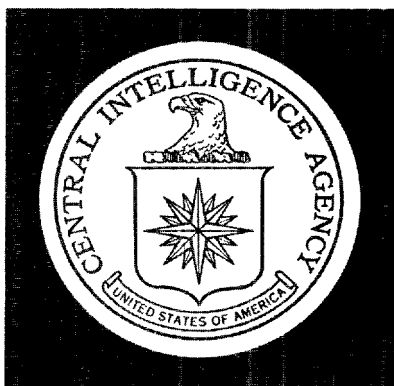


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BOARD OF
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SPECIAL MEMORANDUM

Pakistan: Longer-Term Outlook and Alternatives

Secret

No. 3-69
7 February 1969

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C E N T R A L I N T E L L I G E N C E A G E N C Y

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

7 February 1969

SPECIAL MEMORANDUM NO. 3-69

SUBJECT: Pakistan: Longer-Term Outlook and Alternatives

1. Recent events in Pakistan have shaken conventional notions about that country. It was generally felt that while Ayub's popularity had diminished somewhat, and he was actively disliked by students and intellectuals, he was firmly in the saddle. As a recent Estimate* put it:

Nonetheless, Ayub remains clearly in control... Effective repressive measures by the West Pakistani-controlled security and military services have stifled dissidence in East Pakistan, and this is likely to continue. Opposition in the West itself is feeble and fragmented... In these circumstances, we believe that Ayub will continue to make, without effective challenge, the principal decisions now facing him both in the domestic and foreign field.

* NIE 32-68: "Pakistan. Internal Developments and Foreign Outlook," March 1968.

This memorandum was prepared by the Office of National Estimates. It was discussed with representatives of the Office of Current Intelligence and of the Clandestine Services, who are in general agreement with its judgments. For a more detailed study of the current situation; see CIA Intelligence Memorandum No. 0612/69 "The Situation in Pakistan III," 6 February 1969. Secret

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This judgment was shared by Ayub himself, who was clearly unprepared for the events of the past few months.

2. Beginning in October, and continuing to the present, Pakistan has been convulsed by riots and demonstrations in every city in both the East and West. In the past few weeks, these demonstrations have become massive and more prolonged than anything previously seen in Pakistan. Recent reporting from press and diplomatic sources alike has more and more taken the line that Ayub has suffered a grievous loss of prestige, an erosion of power, and even that his days are numbered.

3. The 1968 Estimate stated that "Ayub continues to have the allegiance and support of his country's predominantly West Pakistani ruling establishment, including the principal civil servants, businessmen, and land owners. Above all, he appears to have the continued support of most officers of the military, the principal bastion of his regime." We know of no evidence that any important components of this establishment have turned against Ayub. Indeed, the police and army are regularly clubbing and shooting rioters. But,

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significantly, many former partisans are beginning to hedge their bets, display grave doubts, and some prominent figures have turned against Ayub.*

4. The protesters are in large part city dwelling students, lawyers, intellectuals, and the educated unemployed, though they have on occasion received considerable support from the general public particularly in East Pakistan. Their opposition to Ayub is of longstanding, but their current perseverance and impact are unprecedented. They have shaken the country and have undoubtedly given a severe shock to the Field Marshal/President. The traditionally fragmented opposition political leaders have, for the most part, been followers in this situation, exploiting rather than directing the wide-spread activities of the demonstrators. The student demonstrators have taken up most of the opposition political demands, however.

5. In particular, the students and their allies are insisting on the abolition of Ayub's creature, the constitutional



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system known as "Basic Democracy." Under this scheme, the voters choose some 120,000 electors or "basic democrats." These then choose the president (who has overwhelming power), the parliament, and the state legislatures. The basic democrats also have considerable authority in local government. In practice this system has meant the perpetuation of the establishment's power. First the basic democrats and the government rig the elections in their favor. Then any oppositionist or potentially troublesome basic democrat who gets elected anyway is subjected to heavy pressure to come around. The result has been rule of, by and for the oligarchy.

6. In addition, the protesters are demanding an end to corruption and nepotism and to such practices as periodic jailing of opposition leaders, repressive rule of East Pakistan by proconsuls from the west wing, and the heavy handed government control of the press. Probably more important to the students than these protests against the way Pakistan has been governed are certain demands related to their own situation, demands which no Pakistani government, Ayub's or another, could meet.

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7. The basic student demands are assurance of a job upon graduation, and lower academic standards so fewer students will be weeded out. But, as in so many under-developed countries, the Pakistani educational system has expanded at a much more rapid rate than the economy's ability to absorb the graduates. This is particularly true of the specialists in law and the liberal arts but increasingly so of those in technical fields as well. The result has been the creation of a restive, dissatisfied urban group which is now exerting very considerable and effective pressures.

8. Faced with this storm of protests and demands, Ayub has so far made only small conciliatory offers. He has shown no disposition to surrender or quit. An autocrat, and a proud one, at the moment he appears determined to ride out the crisis, expecting that -- along with some modest concessions -- his array of troops and policemen will eventually force the protesters to conclude that demonstrating against him is futile. Will he be able to do so? As we said above, there are indications that his position is weakening. A sudden stampede of Ayub's followers, even by

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the military, is not out of the question if they feel his cause is lost. Nor is it impossible that Ayub will himself come to the conclusion that his finest contribution to Pakistan's future would be his retirement, either now or when his term expires in 1970.

9. If Ayub rides out the crisis -- by whatever means -- and remains in power for a time, his position will be less secure than before. Many basic problems will not have been resolved and the new antagonisms which have been created are not likely to abate much. Ayub's many enemies will continue to oppose him, and will do so with a new awareness of his vulnerability. Even if things quiet down for a while, an undercurrent of tension will probably remain as the president awaits another popular assault on his regime and his opponents prepare for it. And, sooner or later, such an event is likely to occur.

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10. If Ayub goes, there are a number of possible alternative developments about which we can now only speculate.

a. A new strong man might seize power and establish a more repressive regime. Someone like General Yahya Khan, the Army chief, could decide that Ayub had lost his grip, take over the presidency and declare martial law. Ayub did something like this himself in 1958, but in vastly different circumstances. A new iron fisted regime might ride out the crisis for now, but would face the grievances and opposition -- in intensified form -- now confronting Ayub. Its long-term survival would be problematical.

b. Ayub might announce his intention to retire on the expiry of his term in early 1970. Although this might have an immediate impact it would not in itself resolve basic grievances. Under the Constitution, the new president would be chosen by the basic democrats, and nearly all opposition leaders have refused to participate in the indirect elections scheduled for late 1969 and early 1970, declaring them fraudulent and undemocratic. His successor would thus not be much more acceptable than

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Ayub himself, unless he promised and made good on some sweeping reforms. He might, however, find it easier to do so.

c. Ayub might resign now. In this case, his temporary successor would be the Speaker of the National Assembly, a Bengali politician and leading figure in Ayub's moribund political party. Constitutionally, the basic democrats elected in 1965 must choose a new president within 90 days. He would, of course, face the same difficulties as those in alternative b.

d. In the event of any of the above alternatives, some constitutional gears might be allowed to slip. A new president acceptable to a large part of the opposition and not obnoxious to the old establishment -- Asghar Khan notably comes to mind -- might be installed by, say military fiat or selection by a rump group of basic democrats. He would probably feel constrained to begin the process of restoring direct democracy and terminating various repressive measures. This would probably lead to a great easing of tensions in the short-term, but it would create new problems. Pakistan's previous experiment with parliamentary democracy was not a happy one. Parliament and the state legislatures were filled with a

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host of corruption-ridden parties jockeying with each other, forming and unforming coalition governments which were weak, unstable, ineffective, and uninspiring.* There seems to be little likelihood this would change if the old rules were restored.

e. A further, and somewhat different contingency must also be kept in mind. A principal feature of Ayub's "Decade of Development" has been the dominance and even exploitation of East Pakistan by the westerners. While the protesters in the east wing have been, as in the west, mostly students, they have at times been joined by significantly large numbers of trade unionists and other elements of the general public. Were Ayub or a strong minded West Pakistani successor to continue harsh and repressive measures, a major Bengali drive for separatism is not out of the question. There are 20,000 troops -- mostly westerners -- in East Pakistan. But the easterner's traditional passiveness, inability to organize effectively, and fear of Indian exploitation of such a move have prevented a major uprising to date.

* In early 1958, in a brawl on the floor of the Bengali legislature, the Speaker was badly beaten and the Deputy Speaker killed.

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The odds are still against such an uprising. The easterners are demanding autonomy, not independence, but their attitudes might change in extreme circumstances.

11. In any event, one of the important causes of Ayub's time of troubles is most unlikely to be resolved by anyone, a situation with significant implications for many other underdeveloped countries. The prospects of the growing number of university graduates are going to remain bleak. Indeed, the country already has an angry educated proletariat strong enough to endanger the future of what had been considered one of the strongest and most securely established regimes in the area. The zeal, unity, and perseverance of the protesters have been enormously enhanced by their grievances against an oppressive regime. Without such grievances, and inspired only by their claims as members of the educated proletariat, they might not provide so formidable a challenge to the government, but no regime could be confident that they would not.

FOR THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES:



ABBOT SMITH
Chairman

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